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German Security Policy

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Conclusions

- The Bundeswehr, a modern, professional, well-trained force of some 340,000 troops, is at the end of a restructuring process which started in 1992. This restructuring was accomplished even as Germany's armed forces successfully contributed to international peace operations.
- Universal conscription remains a structural feature of the German armed forces
- The Crisis Reaction Forces, comprising some 50,000 volunteers from the active component, are Germany's readily available contribution for international military missions.
- The Main Defense Forces are the backbone of Germany's commitment to national and Alliance defense. Their strategic value lies in balancing the overall strategic situation in Europe.
- The new Special Forces Command is able to operate across the entire mission spectrum. It has proven its capabilities by bringing war criminals to the International Court of Justice at The Hague.
- Future restructuring, perhaps triggered by budget constraints, by the increasing cost of new systems, and by the revolution in military affairs, will probably be an evolutionary, rather than a revolutionary process.

Germany in Europe

Germany borders nine states, more than any other European country. It is and always has been, with some exceptions such as the period of the Third Reich and the Cold War, a transit country for people, goods, and traffic throughout Europe. Due to its location, Germany has been affected by the major political, cultural, and intellectual currents in Europe—be it the Reformation, the Enlightenment, democracy, socialism, or communism—and often those ideas were raised or developed by German thinkers and philosophers. This fact may be reflected in the thinking of some intellectual and political circles or in the programs of some political parties.

With more than 82 million inhabitants, Germany (after Russia) is the second most populous state and the strongest economic power in Europe. Its geographic location has enabled it to serve as a bridge, especially between the states of Western Europe and the new Central and Eastern European democracies. In view of its location and size and its economic strengths, Germany has a particular responsibility to bear for peace and understanding in Europe.

At the end of the East-West conflict, the Bundeswehr, the armed forces of a now unified Germany, faced the greatest challenges of any of NATO's armed forces. It had to:

- reduce its military strength from some 600,000 military personnel (Bundeswehr and National Peoples Army-NPA) to 370,000 by 1994 according to international agreements,
- reduce military material and equipment on a large scale under the CFE treaty
- contribute to the German National Program of Unity by establishing new Bundeswehr units and agencies in the new German states, and
- integrate former NPA soldiers into the Bundeswehr.

At the same time, Germany's allies, friends, and the international community were strongly urging it—now unified, fully sovereign, and a member of the UN—to take part in international military peace operations. Step by step, Germany assumed its responsibilities and has participated in more than 20 such operations since 1991.

However, due to its past, Germany will not unilaterally undertake any military mission outside its national boundaries and, therefore, will not try to acquire the capacity to do so. NATO remains our preferred alliance for defense as well as for international military missions outside Germany.

Essential Aspects of German Foreign and Security Policy

With the end of the Cold War, no significant threat to either Germany or NATO's central region remains. However, a number of new crisis regions pose significant potential risks in and for Europe. The Alliance has reacted to those changes with the strategic concept agreed by the participating governments at the Rome summit in 1991. In response, Germany revised its security policy goals and objectives and decided on a new Bundeswehr structure. The principal objective of German foreign and security policy is to safeguard the nation's peace, freedom, and independence.

Five basic goals have evolved from this overall objective, including:

- strengthening links between Europe and the United States for our mutual benefit thereby also strengthening and further developing NATO, which for the foreseeable future remains necessary for a stable peace in Europe;
- continuing efforts to achieve European unity and enable Europe to speak with one voice on security policy and defense matters;
- supporting the reform process, democratic development, and economic growth in the

new Central and Eastern European democracies;

- strengthening the United Nations as a global conflict-resolution body and the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as a regional organization; and
- deepening partnerships with developing countries.

The tasks for the Bundeswehr have been defined as:

- protecting Germany and its citizens against external threats and political extortion
- defending Germany and its allies;
- promoting military stability and European integration;
- serving world peace and international security in accordance with the UN charter; and
- providing disaster relief, saving lives, and supporting humanitarian activities

Structure of the Bundeswehr

The peacetime strength of the Bundeswehr is nearly 340,000 military and some 130,000 civilian personnel. Peacetime forces consist of 200,000 regulars and temporary career volunteers, up to 135,000 conscripts with varying terms of service, and 5,000 reserve duty training positions. Its wartime strength could rise to 680,000.

The German armed forces are divided into three categories, including the:

- Basic Military Organization (BMO), which includes the military installations necessary for peacetime command, administration, support, and training
- Main Defense Forces (MDF), the backbone of national and Alliance defense, are mobilization-dependent
- Reaction Forces (RF) with a strength of some 50,000 military personnel, all of them being regulars or temporary career volunteers. They are Germany's readily available contribution to NATO and WEU operations as well as to international military peace operations in a coalition. The RF meets NATO readiness standards.

National and Alliance defense remains the core function of the German armed forces. Germany as a Central European power strongly believes that its force contribution balances the European strategic situation. This dedication also reassures new NATO members, who have a different perception about potential risks than do Western European states. The posture of the German armed forces provides a high degree of sustainability to both defense and missions in the new spectrum.

The German Army. The army has an overall peacetime strength of some 233,400 soldiers, with the bulk of conscripts in this service. Its basic structure consists of seven divisions and 20.5 active brigades (the half brigade is the German contribution to the Franco-German

brigade), plus four mechanized brigades, which are not active but have the entire equipment prestocked.

The 37,000 soldiers in the RF include only regular officers, NCOs, and enlisted men, including conscripts with prolonged time of service in their units. The RF consists of two division staffs with up to six brigades, including two mechanized brigades, one airborne brigade, one infantry brigade, and one air mechanized brigade. Four additional brigades back up the RF. These forces are well-balanced in terms of light and heavy units.

The German Army has some 3,100 main battle tanks, most of them Leopard II; 4,200 armored vehicles; 2,070 artillery pieces, most of them self-propelled; and some 250 antitank helicopters. The mobilized wartime strength of the German Army is 505,000.

The German Air Force. The air force has a peacetime strength of 77,000 airmen. The BMO, with approximately 28,700 airmen, supports both MDF and RF.

Depending on individual tasks, the MDF, with approximately 19,000 airmen, comprises augmentable units with various levels of operational readiness. They have different roles in peacetime and are intended to fulfill the main task of national and Alliance defense.

Available on short notice, the RF, with 12,300 airmen, would provide cover for the ongoing augmentation of the MDF.

The main task of the air force is to provide:

Air Defense	—	a tactical control service with 8 air surveillance and reporting centers and 13 radar stations
	—	8 fighter squadrons with 121 F-4F and 23 MiG-29
	—	6 surface-to-air missile (SAM) wings consisting of 36 Patriot, 24 Hawk, and 14 Roland units
Offensive Air Operations	—	8 fighter bomber squadrons with 163 FBX-Tornados
	—	2 survivable electronic air defense (SEAD) squadrons with 35 ECR-Tornados
	—	2 squadrons with 38 reconnaissance Tornados
Support	—	6 service regiments
Air Transport	—	4 airlift squadrons with 83 C-160 Transalls
	—	4 squadrons with 86 Bell UH-1D helicopters
	—	1 special air mission wing with an assortment of 25 transport aircraft

The air combat units of the RF constitute the German contribution to NATO Reaction Forces (Air) for the entire extended mission spectrum.

The German Navy. The German navy has more than 27,200 sailors within its basic structure.

It includes 15 destroyers/frigates, 12 conventional submarines, 30 fast patrol boats/ corvettes, 25 mine warfare units, 12 maritime patrol aircraft, 45 helicopters, 50 naval fighter bombers, and 17 medium and large support ships.

The navy generates its floating RF through a system under which ships and boats continually rotate among training, deployment, and maintenance stages, alternating between RF and MDF status. Whether certain units are assigned to the RF depends on their training status. Generally speaking, up to 40 percent of the naval and naval air forces, and up to 4,300 naval troops, belong to the RF. The navy provides two ocean-going deployment groups, each composed of one core unit with up to three frigates and additional units for surface and subsurface warfare, mine warfare, and air assets such as fighter bombers, maritime patrol aircraft, and helicopters. In peacetime, the navy provides one destroyer or frigate and one mine warfare unit each for the permanent NATO deployment units in the Atlantic, Mediterranean, and the European Northern Region. These units represent the German naval contribution to NATO Reaction Forces.

Main Weapon Systems, Equipment, and Procurement

The German armed forces have modern capabilities, even in comparison with the U.S. Armed Forces. Major procurement programs include some 185 new armored self-propelled howitzer (Panzerhaubitze 2000), the most modern artillery system in the world; 80 Tiger attack helicopters; 250 medium transport helicopters, NH 90; 180 new Eurofighters; 3 new frigates, F124; and four U212 medium-scale submarines, which are modern conventional platforms. Furthermore, a new command and control system is soon to be introduced into the army. German military thinking and consequent procurement has always emphasized strengthening the teeth rather than the tail. But the armed forces have recognized the effects of the information age and the revolution in military affairs (RMA). Germany is closely monitoring C4ISR and other enabling technologies. The army, for example, is working closely with the U.S. Army in the digitalization of the battlefield.

Universal Conscription

The Bundeswehr has always been a conscript army. Conscription goes back some 200 years to the Prussian reformers Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, and von Stein. Conscription is evidence of the citizens' willingness to bear their share of the responsibility for protecting their community and country. Conscription keeps the Bundeswehr in close contact with every segment of the population and society, particularly the younger generation. Conscription not only makes Germany's armed forces younger, but also enables the Bundeswehr to use the education and skills of all young German males, be they high school students or skilled and professional laborers, workers, or farmers. Conscription contributes to German unity, in that young conscripts from the West are stationed in the new German states in the East and vice versa. There are also two vital military reasons in favor of maintaining conscription: (1) Mobilization and augmentation capability is impossible to achieve without conscription, which also produces a large number of skilled reservists, and (2) universal conscription provides a solid base for recruitment. The Bundeswehr recruits about 50 percent of its regular officers and NCOs from its pool of conscripts. Basic military service serves as a kind of orientation course. It is fair to say that without conscription the quality of military personnel would drop considerably, because the Bundeswehr would not and could not reach certain parts of the younger generation.

Ten months of basic military service is followed by two months of standby readiness. Conscripts normally serve in the MDF, but they can volunteer for an additional 2-to-13 months service to follow their basic military service. Volunteers for the RF or for international military peace operations, have to prolong their service by a couple of months. This has a training aspect, but is even more the result of a strong belief that conscripts with regular duty obligations should be responsible only for national or Alliance defense.

Universal conscription and professionalism are not mutually exclusive; German units with conscripts have proven to be professional and efficient in exercises, military competitions, and international military peace operations. For example, German conscript units have won the famous Canadian army trophy in the armored vehicle competition more frequently than has any other NATO nation. The same applies to the Boeselager competition for armored reconnaissance troops. In the evaluation of the Commander, Stabilization Forces (SFOR), German units in Bosnia, also consisting of conscripts with prolonged time of service, are performing as well as the units of professional armies in the field.

Given these arguments, German military leaders and politicians feel strongly about retaining universal conscription.

Training

The goal of training conscripts to complete their missions during intensive conventional war under threat of weapons of mass destruction cannot be entirely achieved during basic military service, but the conscript can be provided with intensive training up to platoon level. An additional four-to-six months of training would be provided in times of crisis. To participate in an international military peace operation, conscripts receive additional special training.

The army is proficient in using simulation, wargaming procedures, and advanced computer systems. The army training system, which is at least as good as the one used for training in the U.S. Armed Forces, ranges from individual tasks to corps assignments.

Command and Control

In wartime, commander-in-chief authority rests with the German Chancellor, and the German forces are integrated into the NATO command structure. In peacetime, command and control flows from the Minister of Defense (MOD) to the army, air force, and navy commands. In international military peace operations, one service command is designated as the lead command for the forces stationed abroad. To better enable the MOD to exercise command and control in international military missions, a Federal Armed Forces Operations Center was established in 1995. Command and control at the NATO or coalition level will be exercised through a Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) headquarters, as is the case with the SFOR in Bosnia.

Multinationality

Multinationality and the ability to cooperate effectively have always been structural features of NATO. As a result of the 1991 NATO summit, integration was shifted from the former army group to corps level. Multinationality can be seen in several of the corps now stationed in Germany. In addition to the Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps and the Euro Corps, Germany forms corps with the United States, the Netherlands, and Denmark. The

German-Danish Corps will be the nucleus of a German-Danish-Polish Corps to be established in Stettin, Poland. This corps will be of particular benefit to defense and will also help the Poles integrate their forces into NATO, gain experience in multinational cooperation, restructure their forces in the next two decades, and quickly acquire the ability to participate in international military missions. One major concern is that the U.S. military will develop differently than its allies due to the RMA. Like other European countries, Germany will not have the funds to acquire the same capabilities and systems as will the United States. What the Bundeswehr has to do is to maintain its ability to cooperate effectively with the U.S. Armed Forces.

Expected Future Development

When the new German government came to power last fall, it undertook a broad defense review. A board, called the Future of the Bundeswehr, will be established this spring and is expected to provide suggestions and recommendations for future missions, tasks, and force posture of the Bundeswehr.

The necessary restructuring likely will be an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary process. Germany might improve its capabilities for crisis reaction, but, for the foreseeable future, the main emphasis will be on national and Alliance defense, and universal conscription will probably remain in effect.

Brigadier General Peter Goebel was a visiting fellow at the Institute for National Strategic Studies when he wrote this paper. He now serves as the defense attache for the German Embassy in Washington, D.C. Opinions and conclusions expressed or implied in this paper are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. National Defense University, Department of Defense, or any other U.S. or German government agency.

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